The PULPIT

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Canadian Number

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Contributed by Readers of **THE PULPIT**

A Great Scientist Who Talked With God

In his book *The Man Who Talks With Flowers,* Glenn Clark presents an appealing picture of the great and humble Negro scientist, George Washington Carver, who has recently died. He pictures him as a man who held daily converse with his Creator and listened to his whispers and his secrets of life and nature. "There is literally nothing that I have ever wanted to do, that I asked the blessed Creator to help me do, that I have not been able to accomplish," the scientist said. "It's all very simple," he added, "if one knows how to talk with the Creator. It is simply seeking the Lord and finding him." Speaking of his early morning hours in the woods, he said: "I gather specimens and listen to what God has to say to me. After my morning's talk with God I go into my laboratory and begin to carry out his wishes for the day." Here was one who had with God a truly personal fellowship, enabling him to make of life a wonderfully creative activity in the constant presence of God's goodness. And his life has been a blessing to thousands to whom he has brought both radiance of spirit and the great gifts of nature. Such a life as that of Dr. Carver is an inspiring example for those of us today who have dismissed God from the world, depending alone on our efforts for the management of our lives and destinies.—*Hubert N. Dukes, First Congregational Church, Jackson, Mich.*

The Bond of Christian Love

Near a Japanese fruit and vegetable market in suburban Los Angeles there lives a Christian American mother. For many years she has purchased all her fruits and veegtables from the little Japanese woman there. Their two small boys played together, started to school together and grew up fast friends. The white son had joined the navy. His Japanese-descended friend worked on a farm. After the war broke out in December, the Japanese father was among the first to be apprehended and interned. Living in constant fear of evacuation the Japanese woman shared her anxiety with her American friend who did her best to comfort and advise. One day the American mother received a telegram saying her son had been killed at Pearl Harbor. She had just learned that all Japanese must be evacuated. Within the hour, putting her own terrible grief aside, she returned to the market to break the news gently to her Japanese friend before it came out in the papers. Taking the sobbing little "enemy alien" in to her suddenly empty arms, she said: "Oh! my dear, I could not wait to tell you that you are in no way to blame, nor are your people. War killed our boy as it will kill many of your Japanese boys, and neither you nor I can help it. I still love you as I always have and need you more than ever. For always I am your friend and you are mine, no matter what our governments may do. *(From an article by Gracia D. Booth in The Christian Century.)*

'Let Us Pray'

The Raft is a little book which tells of the amazing voyage of three men in a rubber boat over hundreds of miles of the Pacific ocean. They were U. S. navy fliers whose plane had to "land" on the water and sank so fast that the occupants scarcely had time to launch the lifeboat. Now they were adrift on the wide sea with hardly any equipment or food. Day after day ingenious improvisations and calculations enabled them to steer the little craft and an occasional catch of fish and the rain kept them from dying of hunger or thirst.

After several days one of the three suggested that they say a prayer. They were men who had been reared in a religious atmosphere but had drifted away, but now they agreed to call upon the Almighty for help. That made them feel better and they kept up the prayer meeting for the rest of the journey. "There was comfort," the leader says in the book, "in passing our burden to Someone bigger than we in this empty vastness." Eventually they landed on a strange island, from which they were rescued. Now that they are safely back with friends they will not forget that in their distress they prayed with all their heart and their prayer was answered. They were comforted by Someone whose presence filled "the empty vastness."

That has ever been the experience of God's children. When the outlook was gloomy, they have tried the uplook and have not been disappointed. In these days, when we are bewildered by the clash of wild forces, we are foolish to resist the urge to seek the peace of God.—*Arthur B. Rhinow, Ridgewood Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Prospect

When darkness falls and a black storm rolls down and blots out the stars, when even the horizon is lost in a wild confusion of elements, the master of a ship always redoubles the lookout. It is not enough to batten down the hatches, to take in sail or even to calculate the position to which wind and current have carried the craft. The immemorial wisdom of the sea tells mariners that vigilance must be multiplied when perils abound and that each degree added to the difficulty of seeing ahead must be matched by heightened efforts to pierce the deadly veils of midnight.

There can have been few times when it was as difficult to pierce the future as it is at the beginning of 1943. But that very fact makes it more necessary than ever before to post lookouts at every point of vantage and to repeat incessantly the fateful cry: "Watchman, what of the night?" And if keen vision, struggling to pierce the storm, does not understand all it sees, it must still give its answer concerning every dim shape, every groping shadow, every evanescent pattern of gray against the black. If this be true, shall it be silent when it glimpses a light flashing through the murk? And can it withhold a shout, ringing clear as a great bell through the storm, when it discovers again on a long lost horizon the first faint glimpses of the Light of the World?—*Harold E. Fey, Chicago.*

Goodness Will Triumph

Charles A. Beard was asked what he had learned out of his years of the study of history. He replied by stating four things: 1. "When it's darkest the stars come out." 2. "When a bee steals from a flower, it fertilizes the flower"—meaning that injustices stimulate a people. 3. "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." 4. "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine." There is a dynamic of history that is on the side of progress—*Hubert N. Dukes, First Congregational Church, Jackson, Mich.*

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The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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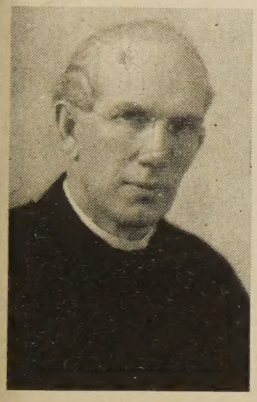
Things to Come Are Yours

BY WILLARD BREWING

Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours. 1 Corinthians 3:22.

THIS arresting word is part of Paul's rich treasure recorded in this crowded casket of a text. To the worldling it is a strange inventory—the world is yours, to enjoy, to serve, to save. The present is yours, to appropriate and capitalize. The future is yours, to possess and mold and administer. Certainly it is a royal treasure.



One wonders whether it is of deliberate significance that Paul does not say "the past is yours." A few years earlier he would certainly have said it. For he was a traditionalist, steeped in the history of his people and prejudiced by it. When on the road to Damascus the risen Christ touched him, he turned his vision from the past to the future. The genius of Christianity is not historical but prophetic. In the new light that broke upon him there was much of his past that was better forgotten. As someone has quaintly said, the past did not lure Paul, it chased him.

A MIRACLE OF HISTORY

This word was written to a little group of Corinthian Christians in the first century. Well, some of the wise folk of that day must have chuckled at it, or laughed out loud. It did seem to be contrary to all reason. It was in the teeth of a great weight of impressive evidence to the contrary. Was the cultural future to be theirs? Surely Cicero and Horace, whose mighty pens had just been laid down, would hold the future in thrall and mold it to their will! History has decreed otherwise. If we had stood beside Paul nineteen centuries ago and had said to some Roman patrician or Greek scholar beside us—"The letter this man is writing will be read by hundreds of thousands more people than all the classical literature of Greece and Rome put together," he would have laughed us to scorn.

But history has vindicated that prophecy. There came in my mail the other day a most interesting piece. It is a map of the world—the two hemispheres—and written all over it the names of the thousand languages into which the New Testament or parts of it have been translated. It is today the one book around which men of all nations, tribes and languages might gather in hope of mutual understanding.

But surely Caesar, emperor of the greatest empire up to that moment, might reach out his mighty hand and lay it on the future? No, a gentler, stronger hand than his, a pierced hand, has done that. Paul was right. The future belonged to the humble followers of Christ. We are trying here to discover if that is still true.

Here is one modern view of the situation: "From the views I have already expressed you will infer the sad conviction which I share, I believe with numbers, of the universal decay and almost death of faith in society. The soul is not preached. The church seems to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct." That has a familiar ring, it might be from yesterday's number of one of our best magazines; but it happens to be a quotation from an address given by Ralph Waldo Emerson to the graduating class of Cambridge Divinity School, July 15, 1838. The proposed funeral of Faith is no new thing, but the fact is repeatedly postponed.

THE FUTURE IS WITH THE MIND

Before returning to our text, let us explore two other texts from the Psalms, which have been illuminated for us by the Moffatt translation. The first is Psalm 94:15—"The future is with men of upright mind." The men who haven't upright minds will not like that. The Machiavellian politician can scarcely conceive what an upright mind is. He is so used to bending and stooping and twisting, that anyone upright is beyond his comprehension. To the serpentine mind which insinuates itself through life, an upright man cannot get anywhere. Nevertheless, the future, the long future, the distant worth-while future is with men of upright mind.

We are comforted by men of great learning and keen observation with the statement that we live in a universe loaded on the side of moral conduct. The man who loads his dice may win a throw or two, but he loses the game because the world is loaded on the other side. G. K. Chesterton says in his unique way: "Man cannot break the laws of God, he can only break himself against them." If a man leaps over a thousand-foot precipice, he does not break the law of gravitation, he only illustrates it. Froude, the great historian, declares that "in the long run it is well with the good, and in the long run it is ill with the evil." The trouble with so many of us is that we haven't the stamina for the "long run." It is pathetic how many comparatively good men today are torn between the shady short run and the upright long run—between their responsibility to their family tomorrow and their duty to God forever.

It was a forward-looking attitude even in the day in which the psalmist wrote to say that the future was with the *mind*. There must have been a good many in his day who believed that the future was in the hands of physical force. It was a day of naked-breasted, empty-handed physical strength, when men filched their living with naked hands from a reluctant soil, and met their enemies face to face in physical struggle. It was a time when the "race was to the swift, and the battle to the strong," and most people thought it would always be so. But the psalmist sensed the coming triumph of the mind.

MODERN CONQUESTS OF THE MIND

We have witnessed in our generation the fulfillment of that dream, for we have lived through a period of vast and marvelous intellectual achievement. Two centuries ago you could have witnessed one of the epochal scenes in that development. You could have seen strong men straining their muscles at heavy tasks and burdens, carrying heavy loads long distances, bending to the oar in simple and primitive toil. Down the streets of every city came a man who lighted the city lights one by one at sunset and put them out one by one at dawn. One man seemed to be taking little practical part in the process. He must have been as irritating to practical industrious people as Jesus and Paul were to their generation. For he was flying a kite in a thunderstorm, and while he thus like a child tapped at Nature's door, the mystic power came that set a million weary men and women at rest, and that kindles in one magic moment the lights that used to be born painfully one by one. The industrial future was in the *mind* of Benjamin Franklin.

A little later in New England a veteran who had lost both arms in the Revolutionary War was earning a precarious living by running a ferry which he had rigged with foot-paddles. A man by the name of Fulton was watching him. Like Franklin, he was sitting at Nature's feet—and sitting there he conceived the steamboat. The future of navigation was in the *mind* of Robert Fulton.

A FUTURE FOR THE PEACEABLE?

Unfortunately we live in an age when intellectual achievement is expressed in physical force and dedicated to mutual destruction. So our future must be in some higher realm. Which leads us naturally to the other word of the psalmist (in Psalm 37:37) which has been thus illuminated by Dr. Moffatt: "There is a future for the peaceable." (Which happens to be a quotation from the same psalm.) That is another strange word in a day like his, almost as strange as the other word of Jesus in his day, "The meek shall inherit the earth." But that was the persistent, unquenchable faith of the ancient prophets—that the lamb would outlive the lion, that the plow would outdrive the sword, and the pruning hook would triumph over the spear.

We have never really tried that fully, for it is a very constructive challenge. We have sometimes let our swords rust on the wall while the fields lay fallow, or have laid aside our spears and left the orchards unpruned. In other words, our wars have been followed by depressions and unemployment.

Or we have beaten our swords into automobiles and our spears into radios and wondered why peace and prosperity did not come. But what the prophet meant was that the mad industry of war must be superseded by the sane industry of peace, and the uncontrolled economic madness of war must be sublimated into the constructive sanity of peace. The distant future is for the peaceable, the meek. Nature illustrates it. Progressively the gentle things are conquering the physically powerful. On the fields where the mastodon and mammoth used to roam, domestic cattle and little lambs graze. The valleys where the giant pines and hemlocks dominated are now decked with delicate flowers. Isaiah's forward-looking word of the lion and the lamb feeding together has been more than fulfilled, for the lamb now feeds alone. And Isaiah's more expansive hope of a warless world is just as sure of fulfillment. There is no future for cruelty and inhumanity. It is temporal; Love is eternal.

THE FUTURE IS FOR ALL MANKIND

When Paul wrote to the little group of humble folk in Corinth (Jew and Gentile together), "the future is yours," he meant that the future is for the *people*. Just before the first Christmas day a glorious word of hope broke on the ears of laboring men on the Judean hills. "Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to *all* people." And when the infant Jesus was brought into the temple to be dedicated, the old man Simeon took him in his arms and sang, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation which shall be to *all* people." And when the child had grown to full manhood and came into that same temple where he had been dedicated, he fulfilled the old man's prophecy. When he saw the privileged group in possession, he shouted: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for *all* people and ye have made it a den of thieves." That is democracy at its truest—*all* things for *all* people.

Let me crown the great apostle's prophetic word with another word of his. Let us read again the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians against this background. Unfulfilled prophecies, disappointed expectations, shattered dreams lying around everywhere. Eloquent tongues which had spoken glowing words gone to dust. Books of knowledge which had been the classics of generations burned as outgrown and obsolete, the wreckage of the centuries. And then, in the midst of it all, three pillars standing—Faith, Hope, Love; the tallest, stateliest of them all—Love.

Now is this lovely poem of Paul's which rises like a lone surviving skylark out of a devastated field, just a flight of idealistic fancy? No! It is a testimony to a great experience. Paul wondered that, after all the storms that had swept humanity, Faith, Hope and Love still remained. And so do we, for we can see it all today in London. Beautiful churches that have been the pride of centuries, heaps of ruin. Schools which for generations have been fountains of culture, blown away.

Homes that have cradled generations in love, undistinguishable. And standing steady, the old abiding pillars—Faith, Hope, Love, around which a new and better London will be built—and around which a new and better world will rise.

Four Men Meet Their Crisis

By R. Edis Fairbairn

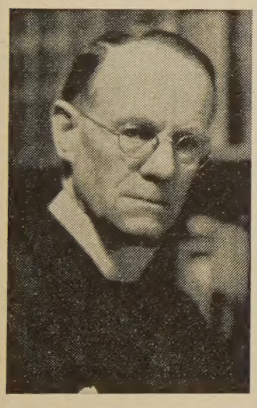
Abram went out—not knowing whither. Hebrews 11:8.

Peter went out—and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:75.

Judas went out—and hanged himself. Matthew 27:5.

Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51.

FOR most of us, most of the time, life is routine. During most of the days we act instinctively, without deliberation or conscious choice. Yet there are few lives which do not have a moment of crisis at some time. Generally we run along through the days in the easy confidence that when we meet a critical moment we will recognize it as such and act with due seriousness in it. Unfortunately we seldom recognize a crisis except by its consequences, when it is over.



What I want to stress, and to illustrate with these four examples, is just this: that while the rest of life is determined by what we do in crisis, we choose and act in crisis as we have previously determined we shall, by what we have made of our insights.

Let us look at these four persons, if we can, with realism, and apart from the haze of pious sentimentalism that tends to obscure all biblical persons and events. These were real men, each of them, facing and dealing with the situations of real life in this actual world. Do not forget that, especially when contemplating Jesus.

ABRAM, PIONEER OF FAITH

Abram, for instance, in adult life broke his social and economic connections with an established civilization and went out to found a new people on the basis of a religious insight. Was he the only man who ever had that insight? Apparently he was the only one who ever acted upon it resolutely. Was that the first religious insight that Abram had ever had and acted upon? That would be hard to believe, judging from the thoroughness of his reorganization of his affairs. Try to picture for yourselves what would be involved in closing business connections, in securing supplies for a new and strange way of life, in changing over from a city life to permanent camp life under canvas with no settled abode. From a common-sense point of view, it was a crazy thing to do. I have no doubt that Abram's best friends told him so with clarity and emphasis. In spite of their well meant protests Abram carried out his decision.

He did it because for him the insight had the value of a direct command of God. Does anybody imagine that God spoke to him with an audible voice out of the blue sky? God spoke to Abram as he speaks to you and to me, in our insights into right and truth and beauty. In Abram God had a soul so disciplined in obedience to his insights that when one came involving the break-up of his home and social relations, and the adoption of a difficult and irksome way of living, he did not falter but obeyed, and went out not knowing whither. Extraordinary man, Abram!

He acted in his crisis as he had trained himself to act through the years. What followed, you know. He became the founder of a new people and community. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says the reason why Abram left the city life was because he sought a different kind of city, with different foundations. Toward the close of the Bible you catch a glimpse of that city of God, but it is in the evangel of Jesus you see it most clearly—not a city of buildings but a community of brothers, the Kingdom of God. It is well for us, as we plan for the supposedly "better" world that is to be after the great war that is now engulfing us, to keep clear in our vision, above all man-made cities and states, this vision of the Kingdom of God.

So Abram stands as the pioneer among all the men of faith. If you read the epistle to the Hebrews with attention you will see that faith is not belief. It is what you do with your belief. Most people have all the right beliefs, and most people are satisfied merely to have beliefs. Beliefs however have no value whatever until and unless you act upon them, commit yourself to them, reorganize your life accordingly, and accept the discipline that will cultivate them. All that Abram must have done.

PETER, THE IMPULSIVE

Well now, here is Peter. Peter—who wilted before the impudent tongue of a scullery-maid, and denied knowledge of Jesus in momentary panic. Peter—who later played the religious snob and got a tongue-lashing for it from one Saul, a mere upstart in Christian circles. Peter—who, according to tradition, uncertain in origin but true to the man's disposition, started to run away from Rome when persecution threatened, and was sent back by a vision of the Lord whom he once before failed.

Was it in irony that Jesus gave this disciple the nickname meaning "The Rock"? He had strong impulses—not well organized. Or did Jesus know that even so irresolute a character as Peter has the strength of the eternal hills at his disposal, when and as long as he is committed to his highest insight? Alas for us all if we have to meet crisis without having resolutely committed ourselves to our best insights! We will be

blown around by the winds of circumstance like a subservient weathercock.

Give Peter his due. He did follow his Lord into danger when the rest ran away and hid. Also, if the tradition is true that he was the oldest among the apostles, there is a natural and necessary reason why he did not have his commitment thoroughly organized. For the purposes of the Kingdom of God it is advisable to start young and take time to become disciplined to the cause.

JUDAS, THE 'PRACTICAL'

And now, Judas—that puzzle of the Gospel record. He was greedy and dishonest, say the narratives. That isn't enough to account for Judas. It does not account for the fact that he had been a disciple of Jesus, and one of those whom Jesus specially chose after a night of prayer to be his immediate circle, his apostles. It does not account for the fact that he had been made the treasurer of the group. He was certainly not chosen treasurer because he was dishonest. Obviously he had business aptitude and experience. Probably he was a sophisticated southerner, and not a naive Galilean.

It may well have been that Judas was the only one among the apostles intelligent enough to see just what was involved in the teaching of Jesus about the nature of the Kingdom of God. When he saw what the Way of Jesus meant, this intelligent business man backed away from it. Jesus' Way was not practical; its standards were too fine and high and much too demanding. Jesus said, "Don't call me Lord unless you are prepared to do the things which I say." Seeing what was involved, Judas was not prepared to follow Jesus in obedience. Logically he repudiated Jesus as Lord; then it became possible for him to betray him.

Ah well, nowadays we have less crude ways of doing that. We avoid phrases like obedience and disobedience, loyalty and treachery. We prefer to speak of idealism over against practicality. The current cant phrases are "the absolute" and "the relative." "The absolute" is spoken with the tone that goes with a curled lip, and is applied to those standards and insights which churches have professed on mounts of prophetic vision and penitence, and have swiftly forsaken in awkward situations demanding action.

A high official of a Canadian church recently explained that he found it necessary to live on the level of the relativities. "To cling to the absolutes," he declared, "would leave me suspended in the air." He was reminded that that was exactly where clinging to the absolutes left Jesus—on a cross. One does not, however, escape being suspended in the air when he betrays the absolutes for the relativities. Here is a man who did that very thing. Judas turned away from the exacting requirements of Jesus to the relativities as he preferred them. And the relativities left him suspended in the air—with a rope choking the life out of him. Judas went out—and hanged himself.

JESUS, WHO FAILED NOT HIS CRISIS

And here is Jesus at his crisis. Quite early in the story the nation's leaders set themselves in opposition to him. Later the people generally lost interest. The multitude thinned. John the Baptist had been executed, and Herod was casting a baleful, bloodshot eye in Jesus' direction. The Pharisee class were conniving to do away with him. His great effort to win the nation to such a repentance as should fit it to serve the Kingdom at hand had definitely failed. What now?

He could have gone away, perhaps with those Greeks who sought an interview, a sort of international pulpit supply committee. Greeks were proverbially hospitable to new ideas. Certainly Jesus need not have thrust his head into the lion's mouth. Or, going to Jerusalem, he need not so sharply have challenged the rulers with his attack on the temple racket, and his dramatized claim to be the looked-for Messiah of Peace.

Why did Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem? Theologians through the past seven centuries have constructed one theory of the Atonement after another until now they seem to have given up the attempt in despair. May it be that the significance of the death of Jesus is too simple for the theological mind? I think it at least possible.

What seems certain is that in the beginning Jesus definitely committed himself to his specific insight into the nature and will of God. He saw God, and he saw him as Father—and, in a father, love is dominant in his relations with his children. If love is supreme then love will have the last word. It will not be a temporary expedient to be laid aside if it does not succeed. Spurned, it will not reach for the sword of omnipotence; it will continue with the ju jitsu of sacrifice and suffering.

It is when I glimpse in any small degree that insight of Jesus, and realize the infinite courage involved in a committal to it, that I understand the cry of Thomas and repeat it, "My Lord and my God." It was because Jesus had long ago committed himself in thought and word and act, that now in the crisis he could face toward Jerusalem, there to meet hostility, betrayal, arrest, shame and the final agony.

Four men met their crisis. As they acted in crisis, so were the consequences for weal or woe, for themselves and for mankind. But each of them acted in his crisis as he had prepared himself to act beforehand. And the nature of the preparation was in what each did with his insight. Abram trained himself in the habit of obedience. Peter failed to organize his commitment. Judas refused to make commitment. Jesus paid the utmost for the highest.

TODAY'S CRISIS—AND WE

This, we say, is a day of crisis. Many are finding it so in personal life. The nations and humanity are in crisis. What is happening in the world, as the Malvern Conference saw and said, is not accidental, but the inevitable outworking of economic and international principles upon which the nations have long been acting. The future for generations to come is being determined in its general direction.

Is this what is commonly called Fate? No. It means that tremendously strong tendencies are created which press upon men and nations. At no point is it

impossible for new insights to rise and for men to respond to them. Yet we may live so dully that it becomes very hard to perceive the insights God is thrusting upon us, and next to impossible to make the venture of committal.

Do you have any insight into the nature of the Kingdom of God, into the meaning of discipleship, into the Way of Jesus? Do not play with it. If you do you will lose it. You will never know you have lost it, for you will retain it, not as an insight, but as a sentimentalism, without power to move you to brave living.

Make commitment to your insight. Seek the fellowship that will clarify and intensify it. Use prayer in its service. Do not be afraid of the routine of religion. So shall you be prepared for any crisis. So shall you pilgrim forth hand-in-hand with God. And the very strength of the Rock of Ages shall be in you, and nothing shall have power to defeat you.

The Crisis Calls to Prayer

In this crisis of civilization, religion must continue to proclaim its faith in man, made in God's image; in the capacity of man to be just, to be decent, to express love. Religion must continue to affirm and reaffirm that love is more natural to man than hate, mercy more natural than malice, peace more natural than war, brotherhood more natural than antagonism, charity more natural than ruthlessness.

How can man acquire faith? How can man assure himself of that faith? How can man strengthen himself by that faith? Only by prayer—prayer which is not merely begging favors of God, but prayer which is meeting with God, having fellowship with him, striving to unite with him. In God is justice, in God is love, in God is mercy, in God is peace, in God is good will. Meeting with God through prayer will strengthen and energize these ideals in the soul of man, and will drive him out to build a good life. God can become the dynamo eternally generating the energy for the building of a just society.

Without prayer religion loses its power, men forget God and deny themselves the blessing which comes from the knowledge of him. Prayer will remind us that mankind is not doomed and hopeless. Prayer will assure us that the ideals of the prophets are not utopian fancies impossible of realization, but the laws of life. Prayer will permit no discouragement. Prayer will allow us to yield to no defeatism. Prayer will invigorate us when weary, will encourage us when gloomy, will heal us when bruised, will lift us up when fallen, will lead us to snatch victory from defeat, even life from death. Prayer will always make us confident, eager, tireless in our labors for God's Kingdom. Prayer will never allow us to surrender nor to haul down the flag of moral idealism.

From my prayers, I am convinced that we are not living in the end of days, that mankind is not doomed, that democracy need not be destroyed, that we are not living in the twilight of civilization.

Ferdinand M. Isserman.

Repentance in a Modern Setting

By Gordon A. Sisco

The times of this ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent. Acts 17:30 (R.V.)

THIS summons of Paul calling upon the Athenians to repent is the same summons with which Jesus opened his public ministry when he came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

One of the tragedies of our religion is that with the passing of time some of its great original words lose their power and meaning. This is true of the word "repent." It has been so overworked that it has come to mean little more than penitence, which is a feeling of regret and sorrow for the wrongdoings of the past. Repentance means all that but more. Literally, it means a changing of the mind or a revising of one's ruling or accepted ideas. It is not only an emotional experience but an intellectual process as well. It is an earnest desire, leading to a persistent effort, to realize such a radical change of mind and moral condition as will enable us in the light of an ideal or standard to choose and realize that which is righteous.

Such then was the summons of Paul, the Apostle of Christ, as he preached on Mars Hill to the men of Athens and it comes home to us today in our war-torn and suffering world.

NEW STANDARDS THROUGH CHRIST'S COMING

You will notice that the ideal or standard which moves us to repentance, or to the developing of a new mind, is clearly set forth in the text. It is not a standard derived from a treatise on philosophy or from a moral code or from a cultural ethos or from such a vague idea as the moral law of the universe. It comes to us by way of revelation. At a given time in history an event took place, a life emerged, a light that lighteth every man appeared in time and from that day to this the process of judgment and repentance and renewal has been going on. God's judgment, says Paul, is "by the man whom he hath ordained," which means that the coming of Christ into our world has raised a new standard of appraisal, sharpened the moral issue and all through the years has classified men and compels men to classify themselves.

On a summer morning before the sun is up, when a haze lies over everything, man's visibility is poor. At such a moment he cannot readily distinguish one object from another or see them in the importance of their relationship. But when the sun is over the horizon its light enables us to see clearly a multitude of objects,

noting their contrasts and likenesses and their relation to some pattern of life. So the coming of Christ revealed the good and showed up the evil as never before. It brought a new touchstone of reality to bear upon man's ideals and motives and accepted ways of life. In the words of St. Luke's Gospel "it brought out the secret aims of many a heart." It divided men and their accepted standards and modes of behavior as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. It called for a revaluation of these accepted standards and values and whenever there was a response new ways of thinking and acting emerged.

THE SOCIAL ORDER TO BE MADE OVER

But, again, the text makes clear that God's new standard revealed in Christ not only applies to individuals one by one but to the social order as well. "Ye men of Athens" is the way Paul addresses his hearers and the Athens of that day calls to mind a structure of civilization into which had been woven a good deal of hay, wood and stubble. Let us apply this truth to our own contemporary situation.

It was Harnack, quoting from Augustine, who defined the gospel as an affair between God and the soul, the soul and its God in the privacy of one's own personal life. This has been the great historic illusion of Protestantism and because of it we have been ethically shortsighted and morally feeble. We are part of a movement in history which gave rise to the structure of absolute nationalism and the application of laissez-faire to industrialism, and we surrendered all too easily to our cultural environment instead of challenging its motives in the name of Christ. The motivating principle of our industrial order has been the mastery of men for the getting of things while the motivating principle of a Christian order of society would be the organization of things for the service of men.

There is much to the credit of our capitalistic system of free enterprise. It has passed through many stages of development, so much so that it is not easy to take it out of our consciousness and examine it objectively. During the past century and up to the last world war it created work, increased material output, widened its benefits, but it could not or would not solve the urgent problem of maximum distribution. We reached the point in our own recent day when this accepted system could have fed, clothed and sustained entire populations without any margin of scarcity, but seemingly it could not reach this high goal so long as profit was the mainspring of its life and activity. This led to a depression both in America and in Europe, the psychological shock of which cannot be overestimated. The stopping of machines, the spectacle of poverty and insecurity in the midst of plenty, so shook the faith of millions of men all over the world that they became an easy prey to those false messiahs of pagan movements whose evil motives, harnessed to science, plunged our world headlong to catastrophe.

We do not understand this war which has engulfed us with its rival ideologies, crossing both sides of the battlelines, until we see it as a struggle within continents whereby the people inarticulately cry for a secure material basis for the serious business of life. It is at bottom a people's struggle, however tangled the issues may appear on the surface. In such a day it will not suffice for the church to assume that a man can live a moral and peaceful life apart from the material circumstances in which his life is rooted.

THE TRUE GOAL OF HISTORY

Then there is this problem of nationalism. In the words of Dr. John A. Mackay "the goal of all history is the bringing into being of a divine society that embraces and transcends peoples of all nations." It is not to be a society based on blood and soil as Hitler has declared, nor yet a society dominated and controlled by those who speak the English tongue as the Anglo-Israelites are wont to believe and others of us are prone to accept, "but a society that is the fruit of a religious belief in the spiritual brotherhood of man."

But how is such a dream to be fulfilled in a world of rival nationalisms? National sovereignty as it has been practiced means the right of a nation to do as it pleases irrespective of the outcome of an action in some other part of the world. It implies that a nation can arbitrarily cut off access to its markets and products though this may cause privation and hardship to innocent people in some other nation. It implies that any nation can by legislation revalue its currency though this may dislocate the trade and business of other nations. This system of dividing the world into groups of sovereign nations and allowing each to go its own way cannot be justified in the light of the Christian revelation. And it is one of the causes that lead straight to war. It is one of the causes among others that brought Germany, Italy and Japan under the leadership of violent and ruthless leaders.

ALL HAVE SINNED

It will not do for us who are allies in this war to pose as the avengers of God to chastise wicked men. We have all sinned and come short. We all stand revealed as coming under the judgments of God as revealed by the one whom he hath ordained to judge the world. God is calling us to repent, to revise our thinking and our customs, to compare our accepted institutions and economic structures and habitual ways of assuming that they are sacrosanct by bringing them into that clear light which lighteth every man. God does not will evil, but chaos and frustration and strife may be God's way at a time such as ours of pointing out to us the discrepancies that persist between the values brought to light in the person of Christ and the values that have actuated our civilization as a whole.

We cannot agree as to the reasons that led to frustration and disaster following the last great war. That grave mistakes were made at Versailles there can be no doubt. You cannot make a bid for peace on the assumption that the military leaders of a nation are responsible for a war and then write into a treaty a clause which pins the guilt on the nation's people as a whole. When our democratic leaders fell into that error they

were, as a modern writer puts it, "destroying one of the fundamental principles upon which the new democratic peace was to rest." They were perhaps unwittingly demonstrating to the world that instead of having fought to make the world safe for democracy they did not trust the will of a people who were about to embrace democracy.

On the other hand, there are those who will always insist that the refusal of the United States to join the League of Nations was actuated by a political rather than a moral motive. Once the step was taken it was inevitable that a process of rationalization should set in that more and more separated America from Europe. It isn't difficult for a Canadian who knows and loves his American brethren to sense how they can at times exaggerate one side of an issue in debate. No, we cannot agree about the past nor is there much to be gained in trying. No one has insight sufficient to write a true history. But if we cannot see eye to eye on the issues of the past we can unite on the issues of the future.

CHRIST'S CHALLENGE TODAY—REPENT!

Paul has a startling word to say in his message to the men of Athens. He attributes their failure to think clearly to an excusable ignorance and he declares that God will overlook it. So is it with us. We have all been foolish and shortsighted in varying degrees in our understanding of the implications of the revelation of God in Christ concerning those issues of the days agone, but now the living, judging spirit of Christ is introducing us to new situations which call for a radical reconstruction of thought. These former times of ignorance God overlooks, but now—and there is a terrible urgency about that word "now"—"he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent," for sin is conscious resistance to the oncoming movements of life.

As we face the future we should realize that righteousness is of God and not of ourselves. God is its author and giver and only as we relate ourselves to him can righteousness come more fully into the world. At the present moment we stand before him as sinners caught in a tragedy we have helped to create, seeking to know and understand his will that we may be given power to do it. That will as revealed in Christ points to an order of life whose every realm is to be brought under the ethical restraints of Christ.

'WE ARE SAVED BY HOPE'

But one must not say that without realizing at the same time that our plans for social betterment and for a just and durable peace, following this war, will be tinged with fallibilities. We must not become utopian saboteurs in this world of shadows. We must learn how to accept approximate results while ever keeping our eyes fixed on the ultimate ideals.

We are saved by hope—not the hope that any particular order we can help to achieve will be the Kingdom of God in its fullness—but hope that by an ever increasing infusion of the spirit of Christ men may move surely and with quickened pace to a solution of the problem of living together in an interdependent world without destroying one another; hope that we can have a larger measure of social controls without losing our essential freedoms; hope that men may not stand frightened and frustrated in the face of the productivity of our complex machines; and hope that by securing for men a basis of material security they may press on to a fuller realization of their spiritual destiny.

The future is open to the realization of that hope to those who repent.

I Saw Two Calvaries

By David A. MacLennan

And they sat and watched Him there. Matthew 27:36.

EARLY last year the first American troops to reach England in the present war marched into London. Their friendly invasion thrilled the admiring populace and exhilarated the soldiers themselves. The Yanks had come! Gleefully they sang from "deep in the heart of Texas," Maine, Michigan and nearly every state in the Union. As they turned into one of the main thoroughfares an unexpected hush fell over the marching men. Jaunty songs and gay greetings died on their lips. For at that moment they looked for the first time upon an area which had been severely blitzed. Before their eyes gaped the great wounds inflicted by aerial bombardment. With mute sympathy they realized that this city and its people had suffered terribly.

Something like that overtakes a sensitive mind in these pre-Lenten days. The Christian Year takes us on pilgrimage with Christ into the city near which he died a violent and vicious death. The holiest week in Christian story begins with a joyous and friendly invasion of the capital. The divine liberator comes! But soon the cheers are stifled by sobs, and by a strange compulsion mankind lingers not amid the palms of triumph but beside that "jagged tree" of tragedy. Like the soldiers of a vanished empire appointed to supervise his execution, we too take our places on Calvary. Somehow, on that skull-shaped hill, vision is clarified, insight is sharpened, and we see more deeply into the meaning of life.

What do you see as you sit and watch him there? Those American soldiers saw two Englands as they entered the old city. At first they saw relatively unscarred landscape and homes; then, turning a corner, they beheld some of the visible results of man's inhumanity to man.

Mr. H. V. Morton, whose travel books have delighted us all, assures us that he too saw two Englands. There was the England he toured immediately pre-

ceding hostilities. It was placid and conventional. Compact of the ancient and the modern, of quiet homes and stately piles, of vast estates and sordid slums, it was the England most of us knew. The other England is the England of total war. Stern and demanding, desperate and daring, wounded but not in her courage, she lifted a symbol of something undying and heroic in the human spirit. "I saw two Englands," says Mr. Morton, and we detect pride and sadness in his voice.

"Behold, I show you a mystery"—the mystery of a twentieth century man looking at the crucifixion of Christ, and beholding not one but two Calvaries. "The Christian Church," wrote Dr. John Knox in *The Man Christ Jesus,* "had its origin in a mystery, if not in a miracle; in the unexplained, if not in the inexplicable." Consider this mystery, that an event nineteen hundred years and continents distant from us possesses contemporaneous quality; that the crucifixion of the Galilean long ago seems reproduced in our own tortured generation; that something done in and through that death exercises present and personal influence upon you and me—upon all of us today.

I

I saw two Calvaries—one on
a green hill far away
Without a city wall,

and the other on this earth in the agony of war.

No reputable student of history denies the actuality of Jesus' death on the cross. Nor, save in jaundiced minds, is there disagreement as to the causes of his summary execution. Corrupt politicians, proud and privileged ecclesiastics, a disillusioned revolutionary, a stupid and indifferent community conspired to accomplish his removal from a society he disturbed and challenged. The holiest became intolerable as he confronted an immoral society. The forces which hustled him out of the city and up to Golgotha reside in us still. He compels a verdict; either we release him or we crucify him, and seek to end forever his dream of a humanity redeemed.

Thus, it is not fanciful but starkest realism to see the reproduction of Calvary throughout the world today. If this is a global war, it is because of global evil, and planetary guilt ultimately traces its slimy path to our doors.

Can an honest man deny that the fairest and best endures crucifixion everywhere in the world? Barbarism has donned the whole armor of science and defiled the sanctities earlier generations believed to be inviolable. Not easily will I forget the bitter contempt for fellow men of another nation which cut through the speech of Frank Laskier, a merchant seaman whose ship encountered a lifeboat from a torpedoed passenger ship in the north Atlantic. His skipper had the boat hoisted onto the deck. When the sailors lifted the tarpaulin, they saw the frozen bodies of little children who had died from exposure after their refugee ship, the City of Benares, had been sunk. That crucifixion of the innocent did something to Laskier. He took a solemn vow that he would not rest until he had done his utmost on any of the seven seas to expel the monstrous evil that had caused it. To the long list of destroyed ships you may add such names as Czechoslovakia, Warsaw, Rotterdam, Lidice, Greece, Pearl Harbor; yes, Cologne, Bremen, Rostov and Lubeck along with the others whose epitaphs we have written in flame.

Granted, that now there seems no alternative but to practice an "interim ethic" in so devilish a world; that now we must by force limit the area of nazi-fascist infection lest we lose forever the chance to try for a saner system of relationships. Nevertheless, *"mea culpa"* is the authentic cry of honest souls who see this second Calvary of our own creation. It will not do now to mouth the easy speeches of superficial men, and murmur our pained regrets over this temporary relapse into dark ages. Your modern pagan may be dubious about schemes of salvation, but he has no doubts left about the need for salvation.

You may remember that Studdert-Kennedy stumbled over an "undersized, underfed German boy, with a wound in his stomach and a hole in his head," and he saw another Calvary. "From that moment on I have never seen the world as anything but a Crucifix. I see the cross set up in every slum, in every filthy overcrowded quarter, in every vulgar flaring street that speaks of luxury and waste of life. I see him staring up at me from the pages of the newspaper that tells of a tortured, lost, bewildered world."

"And they sat and watched him there," with the earth for his Calvary and all men his crucifiers.

II

I saw two Calvaries—one at the center of Christian faith; the other in the heart of God. That Swedish saint, the late Archbishop Soderblom, summed up the significance of the cross in Christian experience when he wrote, "The horrible spectacle of one crucified as a criminal is the central point in the highest religious worship of the human race." In Christian belief the cross is central. It is the supreme symbol of faith because through it the highest speaks to the deepest in man, and speaks the one solving word of God man most needs to receive. Calvary finds us at our worst and evokes our best, as no other event in history has power to do. A few shining Apollos may deny their need of a Savior; most of us have learned through shame and sorrow that if we are to be recovered to moral health and spiritual wholeness Another must participate with us in that miracle.

True, our Lord's life and teaching provide essential elements in the process of our remaking and re-education. Yet, in the deed done on Calvary power is released which breaks the heart and mends it. Unveiled before our eyes, we see the reality of sin and the remedy for this essential wrongness in our human nature. When Socrates lay dying his friends were sure the world would be poorer for his dying. When the majestic Figure on the central cross of Calvary gave up his life, his followers were sure that life forever would be immeasurably enriched by it. And it has been so. Somehow, folk of many creeds have been drawn to him there,

and have found assurance that in his death the black and terrible reality of sin received a fatal blow at its very roots.

The cross, even more than the twisted cross, the swastika, reveals sin's tremendous power; but it reveals also that which makes it a gospel: the power of perfect love and faith to take the worst that men can do, and transmute it into goodness. Love incarnate in a human personality identified itself so completely with us in our need and guilt that by personal commitment to that love we rise above the guilt and realize forgiveness. As the apostle sang, half-breathless with the splendor of it, "God proves his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

No theology, no creedal system of man's devising, could effect the transforming results which this faith has produced. This deed, done in time on Golgotha's mount, must have been done in eternity within the heart of God. Apprehending something of the deep significance of Christ's sacrifice, and subdued to awe by his transcendent forgiveness of his enemies, we sometimes murmur, "God must be like that!" But as we glimpse the other, the eternal Calvary, we know that God *is* that; God is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. Through the clouds of Calvary there shines God's face. As an active volcano reveals the ageless fires burning in the earth's heart since the creation of the world, so the Action on Calvary reveals the eternal love of God our Father and our Redeemer.

"Ever and always I can see, set up above this world of ours, a huge and towering cross with great arms stretched out East and West, from the rising to the setting sun, and on that cross my God still hangs and calls on all brave men and women to come out, and share his sorrow and help to save the world."

> And even could I see him die,
> I could but see a little part
> Of that great love which, like a fire,
> Is always burning in his heart.

Today, as in all the yesterdays, the church of the living God bids men to trust this heroic and holy love; to make the choice which is the commitment to One who is our Savior because he is the Love which endureth, believeth and hopeth all things for us.

> O dearly, dearly has he loved,
> And we must love him too,
> And trust in his redeeming blood,
> And try his works to do.

Behold the two Calvaries, and make this childlike but adequate faith your own!

III

I saw two Calvaries, even while I reflected upon these things: one in the darkness of that first Good Friday, and the other in the light of Easter morn. When the pitifully small company of those who loved him stood by the cross and heard him utter the words, "It is finished!" do you not think that they felt the darkness enveloping life was utterly complete? So much that was lovely seemed finished forever. It was the blackout of every flickering hope. Jesus foresaw it on the eve of his death: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." What an interminable hour! It seems to have lasted until this moment, and despite brighter promise of military victory for our cause, the darkness spreads and deepens.

"It is finished," the darkness covers the earth. In one glorious sense nothing Christ did on Calvary was ended. His influence expands. His truth remains, and wings its way across every trench and boundary. Rome was not finished with him, nor Jerusalem, nor our modern cities of dreadful night and glorious promise in this year of our Lord 1943.

Look at Calvary in the glow of the first day of the week following the crucifixion. Irradiated now by a light which shines from beyond the ramparts of the world, it proclaims the Victory of God. Does that despairing cynic "inside" protest that this is the comforting illusion of religious faith, refuted by the grim facts of this year of strife? I know; there are the vast territories controlled by brutal men; the concentration camps; the myriads of nameless graves; the despoiled children and the starving nations. But look at the cross from the vantage point of Olivet's shattered tomb. Nothing is finished until truth and justice, goodness and love, have their perfect way. Hatred, fear, cruelty and falsehood will never finish anything. He who made the cross of shame a symbol of glory will complete the task God places in our hearts and hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Ogden Nash may not be considered homiletically as useful as he is as a humorist, but in his latest collected verse, *Good Intentions,* he has a striking poem in which he contrasts the Holy Night of long ago with the unholy horrors of today's total war. His conclusion strikes the authentic Christian note and expresses the conviction formed at Calvary:

> Gentlemen of the High Command,
> Who crucify the slums,
> There was an earlier Golgotha:
> The third day comes.

Aye, mark that, you tyrants who would enslave your brothers. Mark that too, ye who faint beneath the load of today's anguish: *the third day comes.*

As God lives and school children read, it comes. The Spirit that suffers with us in our sinning and our sorrows, must reign. Why are we so sure? Because, as the poet E. J. Pratt phrased it in a line of haunting beauty: because we hear within our souls

> the sound of invisible trumpets blowing
> Around two slabs of board right-angled, hammered
> By Roman nails and hung on a Jewish hill.

THE FUTURE has its uncertainties. And it is wisdom to repeat the proverb: "Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." But read with it the testimony of the Apostle Paul who has kept in force his Christ-given insurance policy during all the calamities of a lifetime and then could say, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

RALPH W. SOCKMAN.

The Church and the Irreligious

By James Semple

IN the fifteenth verse of the second chapter of St. Mark's Gospel there is a little phrase, an afterthought added to the sentence, which for a long time has stirred a lively interest in my mind. The words are: "For there were many, and they followed him."

The reference is to the publicans and sinners, the social outcasts of the day, who sat down with Jesus and his disciples at the feast which Levi, the newly called disciple, had made for his friends.

There is no difficulty whatever about the exegesis of this passage. The words are exceedingly clear and simple. They do not form an integral part of the story; they are more in the nature of an "aside," merely a descriptive remark thrust into the narrative. They strike my mind as an exceptionally vivid touch written by an eyewitness of the scene. The author has been moved to add this little personal observation about an unexpected feature which was already characterizing the ministry of his master, Jesus.

And yet, simple as the words are, and almost unnecessary to the record of the incident described in the narrative, they bring us face to face with one of the great problems of religion, and they suggest one of the most difficult questions before the Christian church in our land today, i. e., the relation of the church to the irreligious classes. Let us study that subject for a little while and try to learn from the way in which Jesus dealt with these people something that may help us to face our situation in his spirit.

THE SITUATION IN JESUS' DAY

"For there were many." That little phrase gives us an insight into a pathetic condition of society in Jesus' day. "There were many." Many of them *publicans;* those were the men who collected the taxes either for King Herod Antipas in Galilee or for the Roman government in Judea. They were men who were so unpatriotic as to make their living out of the political degradation of their country. I dare say that many of them were neither criminal nor vicious, but they were selfish and greedy, they were ready to make personal profit out of the political servitude of their nation, and in the conduct of their business they had gained a reputation for dishonesty and extortion. They were commonly looked upon as traitors to their sacred nation, as apostates from their religious faith, and were despised and scorned and hated by all loyal patriotic Jews.

And there were many *sinners.* That term was used to describe the social outcasts of the day, the immoral and criminal types, the people who were lowest down in the social scale, the outlaws of organized society. It referred to those whom we speak of today as the "submerged tenth," the people who had lost all faith in God, in their fellow men, and in themselves, the persons whom no law-abiding, self-respecting Jew cared to recognize as a fellow citizen. But the term sinners was commonly used to denote a much wider class than that. In the popular usage of the time it included many who were neither criminal nor immoral. It meant also those who simply made no effort to keep the religious law, who had grown careless and indifferent, and who had lost all interest in the religious life and aspirations of the nation. It included many of the ordinary folk who were ignorant of many of the precepts of the Law, who consequently made no effort to keep them as the scribes and Pharisees declared that they must be kept, and who were therefore regarded as lying under a curse. Religion had been presented to them as a matter of observing with scrupulous care a vast number of rules and regulations regarding fasting, washing and Sabbath-keeping, so difficult that they had given it up in despair, and were living carelessly, hopelessly and defiantly.

'THERE WERE MANY OF THEM'

All these groups of people were classed together under the term, "publicans and sinners." They were ostracized by the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. No one seemed to care about their moral and religious condition. They were labeled sinners, and they were prone to justify their title. They had the reputation of being irreligious and they lived up to it.

And there were many of them. What an insight that little phrase gives us into the life of that time! What a reflection upon the organization of a society in which this class living outside of the uplifting influence of religion is numerous! "There were many, and they followed him."

"They followed him." That is a very suggestive touch. The attitude of the religious authorities of the time toward the social outcasts was one of scorn and disgust. Their own righteousness consisted largely in keeping themselves separate from these common folk, free from contamination by contact with them even in the market place. And so far as social intercourse with them was concerned, it was not even to be thought of. No danger of them ever following even the most learned and righteous rabbi of the time. How different must have been the attitude of Jesus toward these people, for they followed him. Without perhaps being able to explain just why, they naturally followed Jesus, and sat down with him and his disciples at Levi's feast.

WHY THESE OUTCASTS FOLLOWED JESUS

Now let us try to find an answer to the very interesting question why these social outcasts of that ancient time followed Jesus.

There is no doubt that one reason why they followed Jesuse was because *he cared for them.* He loved them. They were precious in his sight. He looked upon them not with scorn and suspicion, but with eyes of pity and compassion. For him they were scattered as sheep

without a shepherd, and he longed to lead them safely into his Father's fold.

But there was in Jesus' attitude something more than compassion for the lost; there was *faith* in their capacity to be saved. He believed in them. He knew that they could be won back again to a righteous life; that no matter how low they had fallen, no matter how far they wandered astray, the image of the divine had not been obliterated; that the capacity for the good, the true and the beautiful lay within their souls, and could be revived and strengthened until they became valuable members of the Kingdom. He really believed what we often sing, only half-believing, that

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a human hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

JESUS FACED THE FACT OF SIN

By his faith in them Jesus was able to inspire *hope* within their own hearts. Jesus didn't attempt to deceive these social outcasts by pretending that their sin didn't matter. He never tried to smooth over their faults and failings as of no consequence. No! He frankly faced the situation, and asserted that he had come to call sinners to repentance. He knew that the only cure for their sin was through genuine repentance and forgiveness, a changed attitude toward God, and he knew that the only way to obtain that was not through scorn and condemnation but through loving-kindness and mercy. He wouldn't gloss over their sin, but he would win them back to self-respect by having them face it and repent and be forgiven and restored. That was why they followed him, because by his belief in them he inspired hope within their own souls. Their following of Jesus was the natural, the inevitable response of their hearts to his genuine interest in and sympathy with them and faith in them.

Then too, I like to think, there was something so attractive, so inviting, so winsome, so magnetic, about the personality of Jesus that they simply could not resist him. They followed him because they could not help doing so. They acted on the impulse which lies deep within the human heart, and which Tennyson so beautifully described in the words of the Queen: "We needs must love the highest when we see it, not Lancelot nor another."

THE SITUATION TODAY

And now let us turn for a few moments to face the situation before the Christian church in our own day. Have these words any application to ourselves at the present time? "For there were many and they followed him." Are they true of Canada in the twentieth century of the Christian era?

What we sometimes speak of as the "unchurched," those who are living outside of the sphere of the church's influence, what we sometimes refer to hastily and not very accurately as the irreligious classes, are they many in our midst? I mean not only the regular social outcasts, the drunkards, the bootleggers, the prostitutes, the professional gamblers, the drug-fiends and the moral degenerates, not only these who live outside the ranks of respectable society, but also the careless and the indifferent, those who have lost faith in God and in their fellow men, and who have never come into close and vital fellowship with the spirit of Christ, those whom the church has not yet been able to reach out and save—are they many? Can it be truly said of our Christian civilization in Canada today as it was said of Judea in the days of Jesus, that these people form a numerous class?

Conditions in this respect are doubtless not so bad in a town the size of ours as they are in the great cities of our land, and as they are upon the frontier of settlement, and yet it might stir us out of our self-satisfaction with things as they are if we really knew how many even in this Canada are still outside the helpful influence of the church, and who have never come into a saving relationship with Christ. Margaret Slattery, a social worker who has had exceptional opportunity to learn the religious conditions of our day, says: "Our cities and towns are filled with folk supposedly irreligious, or non-religious, who are instead bewildered and hungry, for the religious instincts and impulses are very deeply rooted in man." It is a sad reflection upon us, and upon the Christian church, that the words are still in a large measure truly descriptive of society today.

THE PERSONAL APPLICATION

But even more important, in my opinion, is the other question which grows out of the first, Do they follow us? Can it be said of the representatives of Jesus, the professed disciples of the Lord, as it could truthfully be said of the Master himself, that they follow us? Have they ever felt that we care for them, that we love them, that we are anxious about them? Have they been convinced that we believe in them? Not that we believe the bad about them—of that they are well assured—but that in spite of the bad, we believe in their intrinsic goodness, in their capacity to be saved, to be restored as useful members of society? Has their hope been awakened by our faith in them? Have they been inspired to make one more effort to regain their self-respect through our sympathy with and confidence in them? In a word, have they felt that attractive, winsome, saving power of Jesus through our representation of him?

That is the question, my brethren, which we in the Christian church should face today. I regard it as a very important matter, worthy of our most serious consideration, for to my mind one of the gravest dangers before the Christian church in our day is the danger of its becoming a social club of respectable people, who do not exhibit any evidence of a care for the social outcasts of the time. Nothing could be more disastrous to our spiritual life than the development of such an attitude as that which was characteristic of the Pharisees of the time of Jesus.

It was the neglect of the Church of England to minister to the social and the spiritual needs of the masses of the common people in England which gave the great opportunity which John Wesley the founder of Methodism seized. And when these neglected folk felt that here was a man whose heart was filled with

love and care for their religious welfare they flocked in thousands to listen to him, wherever he came on his preaching mission. And it was when William Booth found that he did not have freedom to minister in the way which seemed to him best to the "down and outs" of the east end of London that he left the Methodist Church and founded the Salvation Army. And the Salvation Army has followed in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth in showing its care for the social outcasts.

All honor to the Salvation Army for its work! There are none too low for it to rescue. But listen! There should not be any need for the Salvation Army! There should not have to be any separate organization to reach the unchurched! The church, the Christian church, the church which is not above following where Jesus went, should not hesitate to reach down to the very depths to bring a fellow man to Christ. My hope and prayer for our United Church in Canada is that she may so express the spirit of Jesus in her relation to the seemingly irreligious classes of our day that she shall be able to draw them unto Christ, in whom alone they can find fullness of life.

For there were many and they followed Him.
So wrote the sacred Scribe of long ago.
They followed, for they felt his kindly love,
His genial presence made their own hearts glow
With life anew, and hope, and peace within,
And hatred for their former life of sin.

And are there many in our day, O Lord,
Who find in us, who do Thy name confess,
Some sign of love and sympathy divine
To save them in their hour of deep distress?
O Lover of the souls of men, may we,
As Shepherds, lead Thy homeless ones to Thee!

Sentence Sermons

You can judge a Christian's experience by the "hilarity" with which he gives to the Lord's work.

Too many people indulge in post-mortem generosity.

There is a man in our town who is not stingy but he does have his generous impulses under perfect control.

There are no new doubts; all the questions have already been asked.

No man is pious just because he refuses to ask questions.

Good religion is never afraid of facts.

A grudge becomes an exceedingly dangerous investment if our own forgiveness depends upon the way we forgive others.

Some "Christians" would not pray "Our Father" if a person of color were kneeling at their side.

One reason why some people learn their lessons the hard way is because they are not willing to give attention when the way is easier.

Every generation has found it hard to learn from the burns of its fathers.

The greatest discovery any man ever makes is that he is living in a world that is ruled by a moral order.

Our generation has grown very smart and clever, but it has never yet outwitted the laws of God.

ROY L. SMITH.

Strengthening Words

BY G. G. D. KILPATRICK

Your words have kept men on their feet and have nerved the weak. Job 4:4 (Moffatt).

ELIPHAZ in his opening address to Job pays the sufferer the tribute given in our text. Oriental speeches generally begin grandiloquently, with piled up compliments often so extreme as to cast doubt on their sincerity. In the case of Eliphaz and his tribute to Job, however, we need have no such doubt; he spoke the simple truth when he referred to Job as a man of character and influence. It was precisely his former faith and established righteousness of life which, to the three friends, made his present collapse so lamentable. Once Job had been a strength and stay to tired men; now in his own trial he had gone to pieces. The friends cannot understand that.

Their treatment of Job, however, is not just now our concern, but that notable testimonial of Eliphaz given in the text, "Your words have kept men on their feet." What light that throws on the character of Job! The drama opens with the delineation of a morally upright man; he "feared God and shunned evil." But that phrase does not much warm our hearts. There are many rich men who are thus conventionally correct—in religion orthodox, in conduct scrupulous—and yet they walk solitary and are not loved because they are not kind. But when Eliphaz says that Job was the type of man who steadied others in the strain of life, we begin to understand why he had friends. Any man who goes about speaking a word of comfort, hope and courage to his fellows is going to accumulate friends.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORDS

"Your words have kept men on their feet." He who can win that for his epitaph at the close of life has not lived in vain. It is a phrase to kindle imagination; it has implications for our lives. "Your words," it says. That is an emphasis not to be overlooked. When it comes to estimating the quality of a life, we generally fall back on the truth bound up with Christ's saying, "By your fruits ye shall know them," and we remember too that in his vision of the final judgment eternal destiny was decided by men's deeds and bearing toward their fellows. And yet if it be true that a man shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven by words, it is nonetheless true that human speech is the revealer of character.

We forget when we quote the famous passage on the last judgment, "Inasmuch as ye did it—or did it not," that there is another and most disquieting teaching of our Lord on this very subject which ignores conduct and bluntly declares that it is the things we say which decide what we are and shall be. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." It is to be remembered too that he said that the man who calls his brother a fool is in danger of hell fire. It is all very well, in palliating the offense of a man's language, to speak soothing things

about "his bark being worse than his bite" and his heart being sound, but our Lord put it to us plainly that there is to be a reckoning not so much for the vocabulary as for the spirit of our speech, not so much for the color of the words we use as for their effect on the souls of others: "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

THE SOUL SPEAKING THROUGH WORDS

That raises the whole question of the influence of our words—a question which we seldom face. It brings us up short—men and women of the heedless speech, who so often say lightly we "spoke without thinking"—to be confronted with this solemn assurance: that the things we say are of eternal significance as revealing what we are. It is because our speech "gives us away" that words may be the basis of judgment on our character. That being so, Eliphaz' tribute to Job takes on new beauty and meaning: "Your words have kept men on their feet." Job was the kind of man in whose company courage and faith revived.

Isolated phrases may have little significance in our speech, but there is no doubt about it—we all possess a certain tone in our conversation. When we dub a man a cynic, a pessimist, a skeptic, an optimist, such judgments are largely formed on the basis of the man's talk. Every day as we converse, whether it be of trifles, of business or graver matters, though our lips frame the words it is the soul in us that speaks, and those who have heard us have intimation of what we are in spirit. Have you been remembering the effect of your words on others? What is your speech doing to your family and your friends? It is doing something. Either they are being helped or hindered; either they are learning from your words—"things pure and lovely and of good report"—or their minds and spirits are being turned from these things. Are your words helping to keep men on their feet? That is the question we all have to face. It is one of the great personal ministries of this most difficult age that we may help men to keep on their feet.

WHEN 'FREE SPEECH' IS DANGEROUS

Morale, whether personal or national, is profoundly affected by atmosphere. The public press has a tremendous influence in this matter, for the press, while it may reflect the national temper, also has much to do with creating it. To be an editorial writer in these days is a large responsibility, but it is equally a responsibility to be a speaker, whether on the platform or off it. We are all talkers; much of what we say is of little significance, though always it is revealing, but when it comes to what we say on matters such as are before us today, we do affect the morale of others. That is not sufficiently considered by many people who speak without thinking and pass emotional, not rational, judgments on men and affairs, not realizing that the words they carelessly utter definitely affect the minds and spirits of others.

The principle of free speech is vital in democratic life, but one cannot but wish that some who speak so freely would consider what their words are doing to the morale of the nation. It is the opportunity and duty of us all in these days so to speak to our fellows as to reinforce their faith and courage and hope. There is an accent of Christian speech which we ought to be learning if we are in any sense to be among those whose words keep men on their feet. Of that there are certain things to be said.

DISCOURAGING WORDS TO BE SHUNNED

First, negatively: It is the part of honor and of kindness to refrain from speaking if we cannot say the thing which strengthens and gives hope. If in the meantime you are so overwhelmed by the difficulty and complexity of the problems which confront you that you see no way out, keep that failure to yourself. You have no right to inflict your doubts upon others; more than that, you wrong your fellows and the whole community if by your talk you contribute to a threatening tendency to take a low view of our prospects.

It is a standing and written rule of the British navy that "no man shall speak discouraging words to his fellows before action." It ought to be a rule for the whole nation. If any, by their loose talk, take the heart out of others, suggesting the worst, they shall at the long last have to answer to God for it. There are some people in this land to whom, for the sake of general morale, it might justly be said: "Keep your mouth shut."

WORDS THAT CORRUPT

Second, and also negatively: It is a sin, for which there is a divine judgment, for a man so to talk that he corrupts others. The most obvious illustration of corrupting speech is understood of all men, for it is peculiarly a man's sin—that is, so-called humor which is obscene. This is not the occasion on which to discuss profanity and foul language. It is significant that men who use it are generally the first to apologize for it in the presence of those whose standards they respect. Swearing is almost invariably simply a bad habit; it is unthinking speech and largely unintelligent. It is often the recourse of men who haven't enough education to express themselves forcibly. They have no vocabulary, therefore emotion escapes in a meaningless flow of ugly words.

But obscenity is another matter. It is not careless; it is deliberate. Vulgarity may be, and unfortunately often is, exceedingly funny—obscenity never. There is not a man of us who has not cause to know the defilement which an unclean jest leaves on the mind. The curse of the vile story is that it sticks. Long after it has been heard it suddenly springs into the mind; often it invades that which is holy. A man with honorable instincts will do his best to blot the thing out, but the allies of the devil in the subconscious mind cherish it.

The man with an unclean mind is the plague spot of society and one can only feel that the anger of the Lord must be white hot against him whose speech corrupts the souls of others. Of the purveyor of the obscene story it may be said—"Your words have thrust men to hell." It is a safe practice for a man to follow,

never to repeat a story he would not tell in the presence of one he honors and loves.

And now on the positive side: If our words are to keep men on their feet, there are three notes that should constantly be heard in our speech:

FAITH IN THE GOOD

First of all: Speak with faith in your fellow men and your country. You have abundant reason to do so if you have the Christlike faculty of discerning the good in others. Granted that if you have an eye only for the moral faults of your fellows you may easily become cynical about human nature. It was said of an old seventeenth century musician in England, Dr. Tyghe, that he always heard the wrong note; that is to say, he detected the discords instead of the cadences. Many people are like that; they have developed their critical faculty and lost skill in the far more important business of appreciation. The effect of their words is always detractive.

Listen to the voices of the world in a day like this. To hear some talk you might conclude that every man who has any means is utterly selfish, every employer is a slave-driver, and only those who demand a complete overthrow of the present economic order have any vision; and of course, every government official, if not corrupt, is at least suspect. An immense amount of harm is being done to the common life by such talk; so far from keeping men on their feet it is begetting in them mistrust and suspicion of their fellows, creating an atmosphere which charges life with possibilities of bitterness and strife.

It is not that we are to keep silent in the face of wrongs. It is a clear duty of the church, for example, to name and expose definite evils in the order of life. But that is an entirely different thing from indiscriminate vilifying of men and institutions. Freedom of speech to some appears to mean license to utter every manner of malicious slander against those who have responsibility and authority. Every thinking man has to criticize if we are to move forward, but ultimately the only critic who has claim on us is he whose speech is savored with constructive idealism. The man who can only rave against those who oppose him has no contribution to make to our need. Malicious criticism is not only destructive in its effects, but it is not the final truth about men or conditions.

DON'T JUDGE THE WORLD BY ITS VILLAINS

The older one grows, the more one discovers the essential soundness of human hearts. In the face of all the trouble of this age, despite its overwhelming problems, we have reason to believe that the character, the innate justice, the basic kindness, the faith of men's hearts is going to find the means to evolve an order of life more just, humane and secure. Why judge the world by its villains when all about us are the multitudes of honorable, earnest, kind and good citizens whose moral sense is not corrupt—whose love of justice, whose faith in man and God are going to provide the spiritual conditions of a better world?

Today of all days, we ought to be thinking proudly of our kind, for these years of war have seen again the strength, devotion and valor of manhood. What men and women have endured and sacrificed and done for us is too great for words, too splendid for praise. The crisis has revealed what they are—splendid in their faithfulness, glorious in unselfishness, magnificent in courage. With such qualities resident in common folk, are we going to despair about the issue of this struggle, or the building of a better world?

Though you personally have no hand in the formulating of governmental or economic policy, you have your chance and your Christian duty to your fellows so to act and speak that they will take heart, that despite cynicism they will be able to keep their feet. It is one of the great functions of the Christian life so to live and speak that those within reach have reason to believe in God and man and goodness.

LIFE, AFTER ALL, IS NOBLE

Second—and still deeper: Speak with dignity and idealism of the meaning and purpose of life. That needs to be said in a day when so many reading people are saturating their minds with a literature which, called "realism," is not less than refined cynicism. The films too, which millions daily see, too often represent life on levels which do not suggest any high purpose or worth in it. You cannot make out a convincing case for the value of a life which is measured only in terms of money, of social standing, of sensuality. It is a question whether life on those terms is really worth living or worth saving. Are we seriously prepared to declare our view of the meaning of life by quoting that ancient cynicism: "Eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die"? And yet there are thousands of books in our libraries and many films in our theaters of which it might be said quite fairly that that is their word for men, at least by implication.

The encouraging note in all the flood of talk today about reconstructing our order of life is that the appeal is not solely to our materialistic interests. It is not merely that men may have more money and shorter hours, that the standard of physical well-being may be raised, that men urge the need of reform. The claim is on greater and worthier grounds, namely, that there are features of life as at present organized which deny to men the development of their true personality and reduce life to a question of bread.

When the advocates of a better social and economic order speak to us they do not commonly quote scripture, but their appeal is, at the last, based on the truth of the Word of God—"Man shall not live by bread alone." Life is meant for greater ends. The Christian position, which is yours, is that "the consciousness of something in life which is sacred, worth living for and worth dying for, is one of our moral indispensables."

TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH OF RELIGION

Finally, and most vital: All who, loving God, love their fellow men are charged with the duty of speaking with faith in religion, in Jesus Christ, in God. It is your words about these great realities which more

than anything else have power to keep men on their feet. It is not to be denied that to speak to men hopefully of the situation or to talk bravely and confidently of the outcome of the war helps. It does; but we have not said the deepest thing till we declare the grounds of our confidence, in God and his purposes—in Jesus Christ and his presence among us.

It is not that on all and sundry occasions a man should work the talk around to religion in order that he may testify. Nevertheless, we have all missed hundreds of chances to speak naturally and sincerely of what religion has meant to us. And that really means that we have missed innumerable chances to fortify our fellows. There is nothing which so confirms our own faith, or which may mean more to others, than a simple and honest telling of what religion means to us in life. The phrase "talking religion" is not in good repute among us. Let us put it this way: If you learn of a friend in trouble, whether it is about money, or about sorrow, or about sin, take your God-given chance to tell such a one where your own life stands and of what God as seen in Jesus Christ has meant and means to you today.

It is told of the great D. L. Moody that once, commuting to Chicago, he sat down beside a man in the car and asked if he believed in Jesus Christ; to which the man bluntly replied, "Mind your own business." "But," said Moody, "it is my business." "Then," said the man, "you must be that fellow Dwight L. Moody." What a tribute to Moody that he should have won a name for being a man who everywhere and on all occasions would speak a word for his Master, and what an indictment of the professed Christians of that area that there should be but one who would be thus recognized!

SAY TO THE FEARFUL, 'BE STRONG'

This week you will have your chance to declare your faith; and though you never know of it, somebody is going to face life with new hope and courage because of your words. Aye, and after all, *you* will, at the last, know about it. It is a great thing to consider that in the day of the final declaring when you stand in God's revealing light, nothing will more prevail with his love than just that a friend should be able to say: "Lord, in the day of my trouble this man's words kept me on my feet."

"Wherefore strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart: Be strong, fear not, behold God."

THE important thing in religion is not the belief that God is omniscient, but the experience that God knows me.—JAMES DENNEY.

A Pastoral Prayer

1-31-43
5-16-43

BY DECOURCY H. RAYNER

O GOD, who art infinite, eternal and unchangeable, we come at Thy bidding to seek Thee, knowing that Thou art always to be found. Accept our praise and worship, as we offer it in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, banish our cares and worries, and help us in this quiet hour of prayer to glorify Thy holy name.

We come humbly into Thy presence, O God, as we remember that Thou art great and glorious, the ruler of the universe, the creator of mankind, and the redeemer of our souls.

We bow in penitence before Thee as we acknowledge that we are unworthy of Thy mercy and lovingkindness. We have accepted Thy Son in name, and have failed to serve him in deed. We confess that our hearts have been cold and our lives fruitless. We have lived to ourselves alone, and have not sought first Thy kingdom and Thy righteousness. Forgive our failures and our indifference, and cleanse us from the stain of sin.

With gratitude we recall the goodness and mercy that have followed us all the days of our life. We praise Thee for the daily blessings which come from Thee, the source of light and love. Our hearts are full of thanksgiving for the liberty which we enjoy as individuals, for the freedom of our country and people, and for preservation against the powers of darkness which overrun the world. Above all we thank Thee for Thy Son, our Savior, for Thy Spirit, our Comforter, and for Thy church, our home.

Hear us, O Lord, as we pray for all nations and their rulers, that they may be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and that the truth may make them free. Let his counsel be heeded, and his will prevail, till all tyrannies be dethroned, and war and the passions that foster it be destroyed, so that under his dominion of righteousness and love peace may prevail throughout the world.

We commend unto Thee this day the men and women who go out to do and suffer, in war, things to which they would not consent save at the call of duty. Let trust in Thee be their continual strength, and, whether in life or death, preserve them from all ill.

Send us forth from Thy house, O Lord, with faith confirmed and loyalty renewed. Prepare us for whatever testings and opportunities the coming days may bring. Subdue all fears within us; gird us with strength; leave us not, neither forsake us, O God of our salvation. Inspire us to put our trust in Thee, to possess our souls in quietness, and to go forward with courage and faithfulness in the way of righteousness. All this we ask in the name of him who is the Light of life, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Playing Peace

A Sermon for Children

By Florence W. Potts

IT was a Sunday morning in early summer. While mother attended a meeting on non-violence in India, five-year-old Tony played with his tinker toy. When mother returned he proudly exhibited the results of two hours of concentrated effort—an elaborate army array! An anti-aircraft gun was poised on top of an intricate machine base. A bomber airplane stood ready to take off. Mounted on front of a tank was a sharp sword aimed at the enemy. After it had all been carefully explained to her, mother asked, "Where are the enemy?"

Tony hadn't yet created the enemy.

Mother quietly asked, "Do you know what the speaker said this morning? He reminded us that Jesus asked us to 'love our enemies.' Suppose we make some 'peace people' to fight your army setup and see how it comes out."

Soon both mother and son were busily building warehouses and stocking them full of warm clothing and bedding, food of all kinds and even beds and furniture. Trucks were secured from the toy closet and were filled with steaming pots of soup, loaves of bread, candy and ice-cream. Soon all was in readiness. When asked whether he would like to help the "peace people" or the "army," Tony chose the former. That gave mother an excellent opportunity to take the offensive. She started off the bomber plane on a whirring scouting expedition, from which the pilot was puzzled to report no defending planes or army in the enemy territory. Cautiously the tank rumbled forward with the artillery close behind, all prepared to make good use of their guns and swords.

At this point Tony advanced the provision trucks and when the army met them and exclaimed with envy how cold and hungry they felt after their long march, he magnanimously distributed the soup and bread and warm clothing. When asked where his army was, he said:

"We don't have any army. We love our enemies."

"But don't you need to fight to get food and riches?"

"No, we work hard to grow our food and we like to give away our extra riches to those who need it, like yourselves."

In amazement the army laid aside their guns and went on a tour of inspection of the peace land—remarking that it was no wonder these people could have such full warehouses if they didn't spend any money for cannon and battleships.

At the invitation of the peace people, the army decided to settle down near by in this strange and wonderful land. Their new neighbors helped them to build a temporary shelter and to dig a well. Someone suggested that the anti-aircraft gun could, with a few changes in tinker-toy construction, become a pump for the well and also a washing machine. The airplane was divested of its bombs and used to run peaceful errands. And, as was fitting under the circumstances, the tank became a tractor with the sword from the front fastened down behind to make a very useful plow.

Abraham Lincoln

Two Poems by Thomas Curtis Clark

There Was a Man

THERE was a man, a plain and lowly man—
And yet a man who held a godly dream.
Above his sordid age he saw a gleam
From Heaven's own light. His prophet eyes could scan
A world of greed and hate, yet hold to hope.
He saw the hapless poor entrapped by fate,
A friendless people doomed by laws of state.
He saw a warring nation blindly grope.

But he had faith, believed in God and good,
Holding that freedom is man's heritage.
He wrote a creed of love on life's dark page,
And preached a gospel of world brotherhood.
There was a man—so long ago he died!—
And his high dream our age has crucified.

Lincoln Still Speaks

HE is not dead. No tomb could be his shrine.
Though tyrants flaunt their power, and war lords rage,
And liberty seems blotted from life's page,
Still, far and wide, his deeds and doctrines shine.
The Rhine and Ganges trumpet Lincoln's tones;
For they are free, though men are bound with chains.
The years, though dark, still herald freedom's gains,
And time shall hurl the tyrants from their thrones.

The night is deep, but day is overdue;
The winter passes, dooming greed and strife.
Men cannot thwart God's rising tides of life.
Across the world spring calls to visions new.
Hear, Lincoln speaks: "Let war's mad conflict cease.
Bind up the broken hearts. Let there be peace."

Sermon Outlines *from* PULPIT Readers

Religion's Second Front

Text: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. —Ephesians 6:10.

I. *Introduction* — During the past year we have heard much of a second front in Europe — a military front. Important as this is, it is more important that we realize the necessity, in the battle of life, to provide a spiritual front at which we may, "in the evil day, stand."

II. *Body of Sermon* — 1. Any religion worthy of our support demands a second front, beyond or removed from the obvious point at which most of the struggle is going on. We must of course watch at this first front, but the danger is that if we go no further we may fall victims to principalities and powers to which we were blinded by our concentration upon a single front. 2. In history religion's second front has stood as an invincible bulwark against the worst that a military conqueror can do. The highest reaches in our Western civilization have been achieved pre-eminently on this front. Today heroic chapters are being written in Holland, Norway — and in Germany itself. There men and women are maintaining their spiritual integrity no matter what slavery and physical deprivation may do to life. Niemoller, Berggrav. "A Bulwark never failing." 3. In our own country, we are likely to miss the importance of religion's second front. Many are wistfully looking to a "return to normalcy" when we can have two cars in every garage and plenty of gas. The first front of ordinary living is vital, but let us find in religion, prayer, worship, social service that second front which alone is dependable in the real life battle. 4. After the war, without a second front of constructive idealism, no permanent peace will come. The church must lead in the making of the world of tomorrow. Secular leaders will fail unless they are first given the vision and the dream which only the church of the living God can supply.

III. *Conclusion*—What can we do, in our own personal lives and as Christians, to prepare for tomorrow? Many things, but above all we must "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Otherwise, we will fail.

(Submitted by Fred S. Buschmeyer, Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church, Washington, D. C.)

Candle in the Wind

Text: For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.—Psalm 18:28.

I. *Introduction*—I remember flickering candles on a wind-swept hill after a young people's conference communion service. Such are our human candles today amid the storms of the world's war and devastation. But God has given mankind the imperishable candle of the soul.

II. *Body of Sermon*—1. Blackouts come to our lives, sometimes voluntarily and wisely imposed. (a) But some we foolishly force ourselves to undergo, such as the blackouts of cynicism or skepticism when we deny that God has lighted our candle of life. (b) Blackouts of misfortune or tragedy may be forced upon us; such blackouts are overcome when we trust God who is on the side of light and truth. 2. God not only lights our candles; he expects us to help lighten the darkness of the world, through kindness, compassion, self-sacrifice. 3. God himself is the Source of light: in Christ he gave the light to a dark world; and the plight of the world today—hatred, human conflict, the terrors of war, disillusionment, despair—is a result of our turning from that light.

III. *Conclusion*—Let us thank God today for the gift of Christ, for the candle he has lighted within our souls, and for the fact that no matter how dark the night or wild the tempest we have a light to bear and a light to share.

(Submitted by Thomas J. Carlisle, Second Presbyterian Church, Delhi, N. Y.)

Toward Better Speech

A Free Forum for the Discussion of Slips of Speech and Manner

The personal pronouns lead a hard life: "Just between you and I"—"The trouble about we people"—"Bless he who has come to us." We overlook the fact that prepositions demand the objective case—"Between you and me."

Err. One of the hymns contains a line, "Thy erring children . . ."—but the choir and congregation have no right to sing, "Thy ear-ing children . . ." Correct pronounciation demands UR-ing.

Adult is commonly accented on the first syllable, A-dult, but the accent must be final, a-DULT.

Been is often pronounced to rhyme with "ten"; it should rhyme with "sin" or "seen."

Have you ever heard, "The AWF-i-sers will come forward and take up the AWF-er-ing"? It is better, if the offering is to be announced at all, to use a scriptural call from some good collection of prayers and orders of service. With a printed order of worship, no announcement of the steps in worship will be needed. However, when officers and offerings are mentioned, they are OF-i-sers and OF-er-ings, with a short o.

From Tennessee comes this suggestion: Status and data are STAY-tus and DAY-tuh, with no short sound; in this same group is gratis, preferably pronounced GRAY-tiss.

From Pennsylvania: Acclimate is ac-CLI-mate, or, phonetically, uh-KLY-mut; the often head AK-luh-mait is second choice.

"Let us omit the third stanza." If we must do it, this is correct. A hymn has stanzas. A line of poetry is a verse.

From Indiana: New is not noo, rhyming with who; it should rhyme with hew. Jerusalem is mispronounced as je-ROOZ-lem and in other strange ways. Call it je-ROO-sa-lem.

From New York: God is sometimes called Gawd, rhyming with Maud. The o is short. Remember the jingle beginning

"How odd
Of God . . ."

This column is based upon the assumption that most people who are guilty of these errors are simply careless. A trip to the dictionary is all that is needed. Send your "pet peeves" for possible use in care the Pulpit or directly to Aubrey N. Brown, Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, W. Va.

Pastoral Counseling in Wartime

By Seward Hiltner and John L. Fortson*

"WHAT can I say to a mother whose son is in service 'west of San Francisco'?" There are probably few ministers who do not face some variation of this question. Wartime problems have greatly increased the need for bringing the resources that lie in Jesus Christ to the hearts and minds of a suffering and confused world. Military chaplains estimate that up to 90 per cent of their work is pastoral counseling.

Undoubtedly civilians will turn to the church increasingly for help on problems which the war has either produced or brought out into the open.

● *Can the Church Meet the Challenge?*

With this responsibility comes a great opportunity. The church will be called on as never before if it is prepared to offer significant pastoral counseling, based on the best knowledge of psychology as well as Christian insight and understanding. But if the church is not prepared for this task, it may lose the best opportunity of the century for rendering a more vital service in helping individuals in the handling of these baffling problems.

The skill with which the church utilizes this opportunity depends to a great extent upon an understanding of the factors involved. There is much in the resources of Christianity which can be said to the mother who is worried about her son "west of San Francisco." But what to say to a particular mother about her particular son is in the realm of pastoral counsel. Indeed, it is as often a question of *how* one speaks—and listens—as it is of *what* he says and listens to, assuming our common Christian heritage.

● *Problems in Peace, War Have Same Basis*

Are the pastoral problems of wartime different from those of peacetime? The answer is both yes and no. Certainly there are different external situations to act as stimuli of the emotions. The mother whose son in uniform has left for an "unknown destination" does confront a source of anxiety or fear which is different from that which she faced when he could be reached in care of "Dale College" or "The Dial Company." But the internal situations, the ultimate governors of emotion, are not themselves changed even by war. The problem which the mother has of reconciling herself to her son's leaving home, for example, of his transforming his emotional dependence from the home of his youth to larger objects of loyalty, is the same.

Laymen and women as well as pastors know that in wartime there is a tendency to blame inner emotional problems on the war or something connected with the war, even when it is plain to the observer that the heart of the problem lies elsewhere. This is known as the "displacement" of emotion. For instance, there is a woman of early middle age in a certain town who is reported to have become a most fanatical "Hitler-hater," exhibiting all the marks of strong emotion upon the mention of Hitler or anything connected with the Axis. However, closer investigation shows clearly that this does not represent an implacable repudiation of that for which Hitler stands, but is rather more of an "excuse" or "outlet" for demonstrating the emotional tensions generated within her by unsolved problems of personal relationships.

● *Prime Importance of 'Pivotal Values'*

At the other extreme, there is a tendency to try to dissociate the war or war conditions from any part in causing difficulties for which they have obviously had some responsibility. From Britain have come reports, though incomplete, that certain kinds of disorders in the causation of which attitudes and motions are known to play a significant part—such as gastric ulcer—have increased during wartime. It should imply no shadow on morale to confess some connection, however indirect, between such disorders and the fears and anxieties war is bound to bring into the open; yet sometimes it has been denied that there is any such relationship.

Between these extremes lie many instances which are equally significant if less striking.

Whether or not one breaks down in the face of new external problems depends on whether he possesses "pivotal values"—that is, an emotional center of life which is sturdy enough to weather any storm. R. D. Gillespie, R. A. F. psychiatrist, said recently that in Britain those who have "pivotal values" are not breaking down. There are indications from that land that the great transformation of national morale has had in general a notably good effect upon mental health. After a recent visit to England Henry P. Van Dusen said: "Public health records show striking improvement; but no one could miss the visible marks of it. It pertains to health of mind and spirit as well as of body."

● *Constant Need of Ministry of Reconciliation*

Many do not have "pivotal values," including many within as well as without the church. As Georgia Harkness said recently, "One may earnestly repent and be heartily sorry for his misdoings . . . but without the lifting of his burden find his hell deeper than before." The distinctive function of pastoral counseling, whether done in the study, the home, the hospital or on the street, is to help lift the burden when the more general ministrations of religion have not in themselves been sufficient.

Pastoral ministry today is not only at the points of drama—with the chaplains on the firing lines or with bereaved parents—though it is certainly physically ill, with the feeble-minded, there. It is also with the mentally and with those in prison, with the children—with all the children of God.

In Christ there are no forgotten men, even in wartime.

The Christian ministry of comfort and consolation is always more than just that. It is a ministry of reconciliation. It involves, therefore, emotional and spiritual understanding. Furthermore, this deeper understanding is not changed by the fact of war.

*Mr. Hiltner is secretary of the Commission on Religion and Health of the Federal Council of Churches. Mr. Fortson is Director of Public Relations for the Federal Council.

The March issue of the *Pulpit* will be a Lenten Number. The April issue a Southern Number.

As the preacher-problems article in the March issue there will appear a contribution by Raymond W. Albright, professor of church history in the Evangelical School of Theology, Reading, Pa., and in Temple University, Philadelphia, on the theme, "Toward an Understanding of Lent 1943."

The Editors.

And that is where the psychological background of pastoral counseling comes in.

● *New Call for Training in Pastoral Psychology*

Hope that the church will be able to meet this new challenge thrown out by the war can be taken from the fact that more and more religious leaders are seeking the essential background understanding on counseling. Such study in Canada has increased during the three and a half years Canada has been at war. Leaders in the English and Scottish churches are referring to the "need of practical training throughout the theological course" and for according to "training in pastoral psychology" a more central place. There are signs that similar steps will be taken in this country.

This is a concern of laymen and women as well as ministers. For whether or not this opportunity is met is a responsibility of the whole church. A laity newly aware of the need will help to make possible for ministers the desired education in this field. It will also aid in many other ways in bringing the deep resources of Christian faith to those who otherwise would make their "bed in hell" and not find Him there.

'Christ-Life through Self-Death'

By Frank C. Laubach

THE MAN who cannot preach too well may be fortunate, for he is not so tempted to court flattery or fame or power. We ministers know (theoretically) that self must die and only Christ remain. But it is our hardest battle; at least it has been mine. St. John of the Cross, in his wonderful book, *The Dark Night of the Soul,* says that we ministers must pass through two dark nights. In the first one we kill the grosser temptations, to do what is forbidden in the ten commandments. After we are pure from these we at last enter a second dark night where we must face a far more subtle temptation. We kill what other people regard as right. We must kill self. "Of course," people say, "a man's first duty is to provide for his comfort, his power, his fame." That is "success"—a comfortable living, power among his fellows, a wide reputation. But the preacher knows that these are the temptations which Jesus faced in the wilderness, which Jesus conquered, but which very few ministers kill absolutely. They are so much harder to kill, because we fight them alone. Nobody else condemns us if we do not kill them, everybody thinks we are fools if we do not take first care of ourselves.

Yet we know that Christ commands us to kill self so that his wonderful life alone may live in us—Christ-life through self-death. How I pity some of the men I know as I see this hardest of all struggles still going on in them! Until it is finally settled they will have no power to save souls, though they speak with the tongues of angels. The devil does not expect a preacher to decide to abandon God and choose evil. The best the devil can get is a compromise, and that is just what he wants. For if a man chooses to serve God and save his own life, he cancels himself; the two motives, in opposite directions, add up to zero for the Kingdom. The devil has divided his enemies and gives a diabolical leer of triumph. And God weeps. God gives Ezekiel this heart-broken message: "Prophesy against the shepherds of Israel . . . they have taken good care of themselves. I am against these shepherds." He that falls down and compromises does seem to prosper for a long while, but the world plunges on its downward tailspin to destruction as it is doing now, and the compromiser is spiritually paralyzed and secretly miserable.

On the other hand, he that loseth his life, (not loseth it "as it were" but in very truth), he shall find himself strong.

● *When Christ Is In Us*

If a minister comes through the second dark night with self killed, he will come out able to repeat the words Jesus used when he came from the wilderness full of the power of the spirit and entered his home church at Nazareth. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he hath sent me to . . . the poor, to heal broken hearts, to release captives, to give sight to the blind, to rescue the oppressed." In other words, when self is dead, then the Christ in us is attracted only and all day long toward need, wherever it is found in a human heart.

Tagore was a prophet when he wrote:

"Here are Thy footsteps and there thy footstool
Among the poorest and the lowliest and the lost.

"Pride can never stoop to where thou walkest
Companion of the companionless
Among the poorest and the lowliest and the lost."

If he lives in us, he leads us out to meet need. We talk to him as we walk with him, about every person we encounter. To see a man, woman, child, is to whisper to Christ about them all. His wistful insatiable eagerness to help and help and help every person burns in our hearts and we live those glorious words of Washington Gladden:

"O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Teach me thy patience, help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care."

● *Our High Calling*

Men will call this "lowly," but in the eyes of Christ and all of the hosts of heaven it is the only permanent work, it is the highest work in the universe. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Once Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savorest not of the things that be of God, but the things that be of man." Do we savor of the things that be of God—only? Or has the devil achieved one more compromise? Fifty per cent of our preachers need to be told to stop taking such good care of themselves. Remember Kagawa in Kobe. He was tubercular and so determined to work hard while he lasted. "He worked so hard he forgot to die."

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THE PULPIT

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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. WILLARD BREWING *is pastor of St. George's* United Church, Toronto, and chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Church in Canada. He was for some years rector of Christ Church, Toronto, and bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church in Canada and Northern U. S. A. He began his service in the United Church as pastor of St. Andrew's-Wesley Church, Vancouver, B. C.

Rev. R. EDIS FAIRBAIRN *is minister of an "aid-*receiving" charge in Windemere, Ont. He was born in England, brought up in a Baptist home and trained as a Methodist. He has done much writing for the church press, especially on the pacifist issue and liquor. He writes: "Religion came alive for me under the preaching of a layman who insistd that Christianity means obeying Jesus."

During his twenty years as minister Rev. GORDON A. SISCO has occupied some of the outstanding pulpits of Canada. In 1936 he was elected secretary of the General Council of the United Church. He is a member of the Executive of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

A native of Boston, Mass, educated at Manitoba and McGill universities, with later study at Harvard, Rev. DAVID A. MACLENNAN has ministered at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto, since 1936. Earlier pastorates were in Hyde Park, Mass., Baltimore, Md., and Montreal (Emmanuel Church). He is chairman of the Toronto community chest council.

Born in Ireland, Rev. JAMES SEMPLE *was trained for* the Methodist ministry in Montreal, Can. For the past ten years he has been pastor of historic Bridge Street United Church, Belleville, Ont., where last fall the United Church held its history-making Tenth General Council. Dr. Semple has held many offices in his own conference, and has been a member of the Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada; he represented that body at the recent meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in Cleveland.

Since 1938 Rev. G. G. D. KILPATRICK *has been* principal of the United Theological College, Montreal. He had previously held pastorates in Ottawa and in Hamilton, Ont. Dr. Kilpatrick was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and received his later education at the University of Toronto, Knox Presbyterian College, Toronto, the University of Berlin, and the United Free Church College, Edinburgh. He served as chaplain during the First World War.

Rev. DE COURCY H. RAYNER *is minister of the* Presbyterian Church in Outremont, a suburb of Montreal, Can.

Mrs. FLORENCE W. POTTS *is a member of a* leading Quaker family and the wife of Thomas I. Potts, director of the C. P. S. camps at Merom, Ind.

Rev. FRANK C. LAUBACH, *who has spent most of* his active life as a missionary and educator in the Philippines, is widely known for his successful experiments in reducing illiteracy by the use of a simplified language which he has invented. The brief article in this issue is an excerpt from an address which he has delivered in this country and elsewhere.

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

EDWARD H. PRUDEN, First Baptist, Washington, D. C. "Do We Deserve Victory?" Jer. 9:23, 24—"Thus saith the Lord, let not the mighty man glory in his might, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me."

PAUL SCHERER, Holy Trinity Lutheran, New York. "Protestantism: Its Assets and Liabilities." Gal. 2:16—"A man is not justified by works, but by faith; for by works shall no man be justified."

WILLIAM P. MERRILL, Brick Presbyterian, New York (Pastor Emeritus). "Can Men Learn?" Isa. 26:9, 10—"Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of unrighteousness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. . . . When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

FRANK L. BROWN, Methodist, Milford, O. "God's Minute Man." Luke 22:23—"I am ready."

S. K. GAMBELL, First Presbyterian, Hightstown, N. J. "A Positive Task in a Negative World." John 21:19—"He saith unto him, Follow me."

FRED S. BUSCHMEYER, Mt. Pleasant Congregational, Washington, D. C. "Expendable Lives." Matt. 16:25—"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

H. S. NOON, Simpson Memorial Methodist, Paoli, Pa. "High Cost Living." Heb. 12:16—"who let his birthright go for a plate of food." (New Testament in Basic English.)

JOHN H. HESTER, Mt. Pleasant Baptist, Pleasantville, N. J. "Be Not Dismayed!" Isa. 40:31—"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

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Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

WITH the North African campaign bogged down by bad weather and embarrassed in political mystery, and the situation in the Pacific showing hardly more than inch-by-inch gains, the United Nations find their chief outlet for optimism in the Russian campaign. There the battle goes favorably with the lifting of the siege of Leningrad after seventeen months of heroic resistance, the isolation of the besiegers of Stalingrad and the promise of retaking the Caucasus by the capture of the key city of Rostov which is said to be imminent. The daily communiques from Moscow play up the significance of these successes with accounts of tens and hundreds of thousands of Germans captured or killed. Somewhat disquieting, therefore, are certain stories coming from London which indicate skepticism concerning the military importance of these victories as measured against the powerful resistance put up by the Germans. It is taken for granted that in a winter campaign the Russians would make some gains, but it is also pointed out that the winter is well advanced and the Russians are a long, long way from regaining the territory which Hitler overran in 1941, while Hitler's forces show no signs of being in rout. More disquieting is the suggestion that Stalin may be laying plans for peace with Hitler based on these winter successes and the failure of the Allies to open up a second front. Meanwhile, Hitler has gained much precious time to organize his defense against an attack across the Mediterranean. And so the optimism of November is for the moment clouded in uncertainty and suspense.

Russia's Winter Campaign

The Book of the Month

THE HISTORIC CHURCH AND MODERN PACIFISM. *By Umphrey Lee. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, $2.00.*

AS I write, this book has not yet been published, but I have had the privilege of reading it in page proofs. In my judgment, it will prove to be an important contribution to the discussion of the Christian and war. The author, who is president of Southern Methodist University, is a New Testament scholar and church historian. His book deals with the teachings of the historic church on war. Beginning with the teachings of Jesus he traces the teaching of Paul and the church Fathers, of Augustine and Aquinas, of the Reformers, of the Anabaptists, the Quakers and the Methodists, and comes down to the rise of the social gospel from which modern pacifism stems. The book is essentially and consistently a historical study. Its treatment is objective and fair. I have always felt that modern Christian pacifism rested its case with a false sense of security upon the teachings of Jesus, and Dr. Lee confirms this feeling. The textual foundation will not uphold the pacifist superstructure. But I am not at all convinced that the church's historical solutions of the war problem meet the situation which war presents to the modern Christian. It is significant that the author, apparently, finds in the history of Christian thought no explicit attempt to deal with the problem of the relation of the church, as church, to war. This is a different problem from that which the Christian citizen confronts and upon it Christian theology has been strangely silent. To me the great value of this book consists in its clearing the ground of unwarranted arguments which pacifists have relied upon, and opening the way for an empirical approach to the two aspects of the war problem in the light of Christian principles.

A Thought for the Month

IT seems increasingly clear to me that, in the providence of God, the world is rushing toward a climax of crisis in which its salvation will depend fundamentally and comprehensively upon the Christian church. As I envisage the outcome of the war, the prospect that peace and order will be established by the secular state, or by any combination of states, grows more and more dim and unrealistic. The winning of the war by the United Nations will at most supply a possibility, a bare field of operation—it will not determine the crop that is to grow upon this field. The military bonds and arrangements which hold the Allies together for the fighting are solemnly precarious. We do not think profoundly about the future if we imagine that present allies in war are sure to remain allies in peace. The same nationalistic, imperial and ideological interests which brought the present war are inherent in the United Nations and may explode in a new war when this one is over. I have little faith that any of our nations is more than superficially repentant. Our political idealism seems to be a desperate trumping up of moral sentiments in order to "buck up" our fighting morale. Once the fighting is over the powerful forces of political "realism" will have their chance to take the situation in hand with suicidal consequences for mankind. The historic picture of the fall of Roman civilization haunts my mind. It was the Christian church, under the leadership of its great bishops, which became responsible for the preservation of some fragments of the ancient culture and which, under a new concept of history, organized the Western world into a new unity. Some such responsibility may again devolve upon the Christian community. This means that stormy weather is ahead for Christianity—and an unparalleled opportunity. My hope for the future is in the Christian church, but it is a trembling hope. May God send us men of vision and courage to lead his church into the new day which his providence is surely ushering in!

A Solemn Look Into the Future

Charles Clayton Morrison

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